

**May**

# *Smithereens* Literary Magazine

**2019**



## **Issue #3**

J. Taylor Bell • Susan Connolly • Ian Davidson • Ellen Dillon  
Tomás De Faoite • Rebecca Ruth Gould • Sven Kretzschmar • Wes Lee  
DS Maolalai • Emilee Moyce • Ciarán O'Rourke • Maeve O'Sullivan

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# *Maeve O'Sullivan*

## **Annaghamakerrig Villanelle**

The rain drips down upon the house, the lake.  
Inside, the artists write and paint and think –  
we all have work, plans, artifacts to make.

Breakfast, lunch can vary, tea and cake,  
at seven we converge to eat and drink.  
The rain drips down upon the house, the lake.

At night Miss Worby's spirit makes us quake  
and some folk cannot sleep a single wink –  
we all have work, plans, artifacts to make.

At times we go out walking, take a break  
and bump into the bats, the frogs, the mink;  
the rain drips down upon the house, the lake.

Sometimes you have to detour just to shake  
off drama queens who're always on the brink –  
we all have work, plans, artifacts to make.

With poems to write and photographs to take,  
the week is over quickly, in a blink!  
The rain drips down upon the house, the lake,  
we all have work, plans, artifacts to make.

## **Málaga Moments, a haiku sequence**

baggage carousel  
turning  
a young girl in pink shoes

\* \* \*

silent cheerleaders  
in the breakfast garden —  
these acacias

\* \* \*

dozens of umbrellas opening   light Spanish drizzle

\* \* \*

dogs gallop  
in the dried-up stream —  
Easter Monday

\* \* \*

Crow's Rock   two tides meet at its isthmus

\* \* \*

in between chapels  
these dry holy water fonts —  
Málaga Cathedral

\* \* \*

airport departures   a bird flies in & lands

# *Ian Davidson*

## **Something for your Troubles**

Something for your trouble your troubled  
mind this troubled poem and something  
for your woman's trouble that is  
shrouded in dark mystery and behind  
seven veils. And something for the  
young Bernadette who troubled herself  
sufficiently and these troubled poems  
that crossed a border that was an  
imposition. I was in trouble for  
getting home late but armed occupation  
does that, it is an inconvenience, it is  
a dilemma it is a disturbance. The  
troubled surface of the water and  
a thirty year war so sorry for your  
tummy troubles, so sorry for the  
bother and the cause.

## Poetry Plastique

These poems are plastic poems these poems can  
explode in the wrong hands. Packed into pipes and  
smoke them these poems are kept in underground  
dumps are the province of hot heads whose words  
can be bent to shape whose aged and opaque  
surfaces bear the marks of a million scratches  
from lost at sea to wraparound.

Achieving potential through a border  
crossing that is no border at all but a  
line on a map these plastic poems are in two  
languages and can adapt themselves to both  
and the words can pour themselves through a  
landscape and leave little behind. I wish these  
plastic poems would not keep adapting  
themselves to new conditions these plastic poems.

# Susan Connolly

## Samia Yusuf Omar

*Samia Yusuf Omar was a champion sprinter from Mogadishu, Somalia. She drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in April 2012.*

omar  
omar  
omaromar  
omaromar  
yusufyus  
ususyusu  
yusus a ufyuom  
arusus a mfyusom  
omarsus a m.i suomar  
omarus a m.i aufomar  
omarfy a m.i a fyomar  
omaryu m.i a syuomar  
arusufi a myusom  
arsufy a syusuom  
yusufyus  
usufyusu  
omaromar  
omaromar  
omar  
omar

## Inscription on a High Cross

ór domu ire dachlas  
nd ern adí  
ch ro s

ór do *muire* dachlas  
nd ern adí  
ch ro s

ór do *muiredach* las  
nd ern adí  
ch ro s

*a prayer for muiredach*  
las nd ern adí  
*chros*

*a prayer for muiredach*  
las nd ern adí  
*cross*

*a prayer for muiredach*  
lasndernad í  
*cross*

## A PRAYER FOR MUIREDACH WHO HAD THIS CROSS MADE

ór: prayer      do: for      Muiredach: name of patron  
chros: cross      lasndernad: had made



# *Tomás De Faoite*

## **Island**

a sign outside a closed museum,  
apologizing to the visitor that music  
died out on the island many years ago.

a dog tied to a lamppost  
in a farmyard all day long  
because it worries sheep.

a dog in a ditch on a leash  
waiting for a car it can hear coming  
from miles off to pass.

an islander walking home from the pub  
hears a car coming  
and jumps in a ditch.

a church on a hillside  
open to the elements  
gulls on the steeple. fishy people.

a woman in the kitchen, crushing some  
flour, shouting to her man;  
'Murdo or more dough.'

## Kipling

I google *Kipling was a coward*.  
I find Rudyard beside Coward's  
Mad Dogs and Englishmen go out  
in the midday sun. I google *Kipling*

*was a killer* and come upon *what's*  
*the difference between Mr. Kipling*  
*and the Ipswich Killer?* I google *Gogol*  
by mistake, then *Rudyard Kipling*

*killed his only son* and come upon *Kipling*  
*meets Turgenev, sort of; and Sokurov*  
*suggesting a father's love ends in*  
*sacrifice; a sons--John Kipling killed*

at Loos. I google Loos and come upon  
*Grand Café-Restaurant LOOS--*  
*Westplein 1 Rotterdam; a café for*  
alternative rock, Gabber 90's,

basement beats.

I google *gabber*. The house shakes.

# Ellen Dillon

## Je réfléchis

Il est bien plus tard qu'avant il me semble/ où subsistent encore les échos qui hantaient la ligne ? / dans le Vercors les accords se perdent/ je lis parce que c'est la seule chose que je sais faire/ que j'essaie de faire// on m'a vu dans le Vercors/ dans le vert/corps sauter à l'élastique/ histoire d'où ?// en tant que trace je reste/ je subsiste/ je demeure/ je persiste/ en tant que trace je

*iiiiiiiiii should have known better*

le vent qui ne nous portera plus laisse penser qu'il nous parle/ ses paroles nous soufflent à l'oreille sans pour autant laisser une seule trace de sens// qu'est-ce que cela signifie ?

une différence est que cette espace/ n'est pas construite/ mais improvisée/ de l'imprévu déconstruit

y a un rythme qui m'échappe (shap) qui m'échappe (shap) clé à cette forme abstraite (strett) qui m'enfuit (fwee)

c'est peu à dire (à female dire) rayée comme une goutte de soleil d'or

comment ça marche ? *how does that walk?*

la fragilité du mot fragile même/ sa propre friabilité// je réfléchis/ comme l'eau/ ces phénomènes

## I reflec

It seems much later than before/ where do the echoes that haunted the line  
survive?/ in the Vercors agreements/ chords get lost/ I read because it's the only  
thing I know how to do/ try to do// I was seen in the Vercors/ green/ body bungee  
jumping// sweet story of where?/ as a trace I stay/ I survive/ I remain/ I persist/ as  
a trace I

*Je je je je je j'aurais dû mieux savoir*

the wind that will no longer carry us lets us think it's talking to us/ its words whisper  
in our ear without managing to leave a single trace of meaning// what does that  
even mean?

one difference is that this space is not built/ but improvised/ from the  
deconstructed unexpected

there's a rhythm that escapes (scapes) that escapes (scapes) key to this abstract  
shape (ape) that flees (ees)

it's not much to say (a female say) striped like a drop of golden sun

how does that walk? *comment ça marche ?*

the fragility of the word fragile itself/ its own friability// I reflect/ like water/ these  
phenomena

## *Wes Lee*

### **Her**

There were dogs that night. A bitch had whelped  
in the kitchen and puppies mewled: blind eyes  
to cry at my hands.

Drunk enough, I bent to them simulating love before  
your eyes, as if my *coos* and *ahs* and soft stroking of their  
tender new skin would mirror what was about to happen.

I felt you were in on it; smiling, as if I was doing  
something right. I pushed a blow-up  
doll into the room while I stayed somewhere above watching.

A sleeping bag was all you had for cover. And when  
you entered the doll she moved all the ways you may  
have wanted her to,

and because of the drink you were soft as a snail and  
she felt as much as a blow-up doll might.

## **Mania Come Back**

What were the manic periods like.  
The sun bearing down, days long, too  
long, never ending with the sun, and  
connecting with something like God.  
Seeing evidence of signs.  
Archetypal dreams: walking along a  
stone tower toppled on the sand.  
The feeling of revelation that cannot,  
of course, be grasped.  
Flying. I have only flown once and  
that was fantastic!  
Dreams now can easily be traced to the  
events of the day.  
Seeing the beautifully fitting back of  
a woman's dress.  
Appearing in my dream in a dress I  
once owned. Tight black lace. Looking  
down along my body wearing that dress.  
I would like to wear that dress.  
I would like to have that body again.  
Standing on the edge of a cliff face  
shouting: Mania come back!

# *Emilee Moyce*

## **Paper Cranes**

Paper cranes never granted me any wishes,  
they only stole delicate lines of fingerprints  
and nights of restful sleep, patience taunting me.

I've folded dozens of happy marriages  
and strung up a few prosperous and peaceful lives  
but I never surrendered my own sacrifice  
to the paper gods in return for my own wish.

I'm not even sure what I'd ask for if I did.  
Perhaps not to rot in a landfill years from now  
as I'm sure some of my lovely birds are doing,  
their beaks crushed under bags of filth and needless waste.

Maybe I'd wish not to have my wings clipped and crushed,  
not to be stowed away, a fading memory  
gathering dust in a box where the sun can't reach.

Or maybe I'd try to be a bit less selfish  
and wish for the world to find some kind of order,  
but I think futility would halt my fingers  
and I'd give up before I made the thousandth fold.

I suppose I'd wish for light and vibrant colour,  
for warming sun and for the strength to stretch my wings,  
but it never felt right to put forth my own hope –  
it's far easier to grant others' wishes than your own.

# *DS Maolalai*

## **Cranes**

spot the sky,  
shifting ice  
into summertime,  
with autumn  
laid down  
as cement. men  
dangle from buildings,  
clinging on  
ropes, spinning like  
wind-tossed  
spiders. the wild while  
spines  
against our safety. it saws  
ropes,  
leaves grip  
weak  
as a puppy  
out for his first walk.

from the sun  
snow tumbles – it is warm  
as packing peanuts. we bundle up  
and go west in winter.  
all morning  
our shadow before us. it only shines  
in the evening,  
when we finally stop  
for lunch.



## **A Medium Tide**

the air was  
grey  
and the day  
was grey  
and dublin was grey, laid out in the distance,  
slouched low  
like some industrial  
animal town,  
though all they make now  
is ideas.

and we were waiting  
for the bus  
to take us in there – the day  
was one of those grey ones  
with low clouds  
which threaten rain  
but never break it  
and we were on  
the coast road, near to my house  
at the time. it was a medium tide;  
not definitely going in  
or going out  
and grey crows  
were angry, scavenging the sand. they looked graceless;  
as birds, beach-foraging  
doesn't suit them. but I suppose  
for some animals  
style can't count.

she pointed to the crows  
and to the water  
fighting with the seagulls. said something  
clever about the colours  
on the sea. the sea  
sat stagnant, grey,  
lurking behind  
bull island. there was a rod  
stuck in the shallows  
like the top of a great key. I told her  
"you can't see it  
but that rod  
is turning,  
slow as a clock's  
hour hand. that's what brings  
the water in  
and scares away  
the birds."

# *Ciarán O'Rourke*

## **World Cup**

With the late-flung  
weight

of his drag-tailed boot,  
Akinfeev

kicked off fate  
last night

and sent  
a shudder trembling

through the hard, perfected  
sponge of earth

and across  
the watching world, Russia

shaking from its  
perch on high

gigantic Spain,  
bewildered

still by the un-  
skilled, surging

heart of their enemy,  
which won

the final field –  
all this a-tingle

as word elsewhere  
confirms

what stocks began  
to whisper days before:

that the ripened  
money mogul, Murdoch,

who squints and coughs  
in the flame-blue suit

of a cartoon billionaire,  
has bowed

to the might  
of modern times, our age

of star-white screens  
and digitised desire,

and merged  
in one historic stroke

his swilling vat  
of news and noise

with Disney Inc. –  
Murdoch,

who clocks-in time  
by phone each week

with the globe's golden-  
haired commander-chief

and knows  
the deal; whose

running vineyard  
retreats and blooms

in splendrous colours  
every year,

as the wildest Californian  
fires worsen,

scorching the air  
a desert red.

# *Rebecca Ruth Gould*

## **Constellations**

The cosmos is a Ka'ba  
stretched against the sky,  
stripped of signs.

The firmament echoes God  
speaking to Muhammad,  
dictating the Quran.

Back then, the sky was synchronized  
to the cycles of time.  
& the Pleiades watched over us.

Back then, the Ka'ba circulated above.  
Everything that happened on earth  
was mirrored above.

God was undead.  
The signs on the Ka'ba have ceased  
speaking our language.

We are in prison, waiting  
to hear our names.  
We make up our languages as we go along.

## **On Loving Two Men**

Although it is not publicly  
known, I love two men.

I love the way you both  
fulfil me in different ways.

My mind rotates  
between the two of you

when I brew coffee in the morning  
& wander through my apartment

greeting the sun & bidding  
the moon farewell.

Ok, love is a strong word  
& it's true I haven't said it

to your faces & that you are both  
married, which isn't a problem

for me, but others may judge.  
They will say that love

should exist only between those  
who perform the sacrament.

Let's just say: I value you both  
in non-instrumental ways.

Let's just say: you help me  
discover myself

& I am overcome with  
fondness & affection

when my mind crosses  
into thoughts of you.

Let's just say: I am  
confounded by your plurality

& the multiplicity of yous  
makes me multiple too.

Walt Whitman would have understood.  
I hope my love doesn't anger you.

Since it is forbidden in this  
bipartisan world to love two men

without boundaries or walls,  
in the way that I love you—

since our bodies feign divisions  
like Democrats & Republicans

filibustering on Capitol Hill, morbidly  
repeating the axioms we learned in school—

I will mutter my refrain  
beneath my breath.

My upper lip will whisper my affection.  
My lower lip will make me mute.



## *J. Taylor Bell*

### **Everything will probably be alright**

all irish poetry has been written  
in relation to the rain – the land bleeds  
in oversaturation; too much color  
wears on everyone like long traditions  
of looking indefatigably up.  
it takes practice but at some present point  
life might no longer appear gray; a given  
fact given the fact that any moment now  
the sky we've decried will come unstitched  
like an annotated wound we'd hidden.  
light made of unspooled years and the awful  
considerations of history fooled some  
into thinking things here will never change,  
but then the sun shines & life's colorful again.

## **Kingfisher**

i saw a brief, blue slice of cleaving sky  
wash over the waters of the lagan  
& considered how much of life is spent  
looking for a way to somehow fit in  
among all this gray. and i'd like to say  
i understand.....but actually i don't  
sympathize. truth is i'd rather rebuff  
all the others who dare to criticize  
these adjustments to a lack of color,  
though i'd never speak on one's behalf,  
or deign to know the desires of another.  
besides, most things only stay a second  
picking a fish or two like a lotus  
then they fly off before anyone notices

# *Sven Kretzschmar*

## **Bull Island spiders**

*(after Pat Boran)*

On Bull Island, there by the sea –  
a sea of spiders. Remnants  
of a Hallowe'en party backout  
from the dunes themselves –  
marshlands the size of a public pool

completely covered in cobwebs.  
Money spiders – a sea of silver silken  
gossamer spun around them in a December  
mildness so very unknown from home.  
You'd wonder why birds would not

be Christmas-feasting on them  
while the little crawlers have not yet  
ballooned to other, far-off places,  
lifted away from the floodplain  
into the plain blue sky above the peninsula,

clear except for the familiar cirrostratus  
you passed upon arrival. On this deep marsh  
your new four-legged friend retreats  
facing the phenomenon. A handful  
of them brought back in hair

and trousers tries to feed on you,  
commemorating the impeded birds. A shower  
will take them down the drain before you'll take  
to a screen searching for information and clues  
on the world wide web.

# Contributors

**J. Taylor Bell** is studying an MA in Poetry at Queen's University. He is the Seamus Heaney Center International Scholar of 2018-19 in Belfast, and was a finalist for the Overland Fair Australia Poetry Prize. His writing has appeared in *The Tangerine*, *Honest Ulsterman*, *A3 Review*, *Sixfold* and other publications.

**Susan Connolly** has published three collections of poetry: *For the Stranger* (Dedalus Press, 1993), *Forest Music* (Shearsman Books, 2009) and *Bridge of the Ford* (Shearsman Books, 2016). *Bridge of the Ford* is a collection of visual poetry and a tribute to her home town of Drogheda, Co. Louth. She was awarded the Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Fellowship in Poetry in 2001. Her poems are included in *The Field Day Anthology: Vol IV, Voices and Poetry of Ireland* and *Windharp: Poems of Ireland since 1916*.

**Ian Davidson** moved to Ireland in September 2017. Recent poetry publications include *The Tyne and Wear Poems* (Red Squirrel Press 2014), *In Agitation* (KFS 2014), *On the Way to Work* (Shearsman 2017) and *Gateshead and Back* (Crater 2018). Recent critical work includes a number of essays that explore ideas of mobility in the work of Diane di Prima, Bill Griffiths and George and Mary Oppen amongst others. A sequence of poems written during an extended stay at St James' hospital in Dublin in 2018 is forthcoming from New Dublin Press. Ian is Professor of English and Creative Writing at UCD in Dublin.

**Ellen Dillon** is a secondary school French and English teacher in Co. Limerick, Ireland. She has just completed a PhD on abstraction in contemporary poetry at the School of English in DCU. Her pamphlet *Heave* was recently published by Smithereens Press and *Sonnets to Malkmus* is forthcoming from Sad Press. Some of her poems have appeared in *Adjacent Pineapple*, *Amberflora*, *Banshee*, *CUMULUS*, *Datableed*, *MOTE*, *Para•text*, *Smithereens Literary Magazine*, and *Zarf*.

**Tomás De Faoite** was born in Dowth, Ireland. He lives in The Netherlands. Some of his recent poetry has appeared in *Poetry Ireland* and *Southword*. Reinart Editions published his first collection *Dust* in 1998. His second collection *Green Father* was published by Poezie-uitgeverij Wel. Both collections are in Dutch and English. He is busy with a third collection.

**Rebecca Ruth Gould**'s poems and translations have appeared in *Nimrod*, *Kenyon Review*, *Tin House*, *The Hudson Review*, *Salt Hill*, and *The Atlantic Review*. She translates from Persian, Russian, and Georgian, and has translated books such as *After Tomorrow the Days Disappear: Ghazals and Other Poems of Hasan Sijzi of Delhi* (Northwestern University Press, 2016) and *The Death of Bagrat Zakharych and other Stories by Vazha-Pshavela* (Paper & Ink, 2019). Her poem "Grocery Shopping" was a finalist for the Luminaire Award for Best Poetry in 2017, and she is a Pushcart Prize nominee.

**Sven Kretschmar** is a poet from the southwest of Germany. He read Philosophy and English in Saarbrücken, Luxembourg, and Dublin. His poetry has been published in *OTwo*, *the catullan*, *Skylight47*, and *Coast to Coast to Coast* among others, and he was awarded 1st prize in the Creating a Buzz in Strokestown competition 2018. Further work has appeared with *Poetry Jukebox* in Belfast and is forthcoming in *Ropes* and in several anthologies from Irish publishers scheduled for autumn 2019.

**Wes Lee** was born and raised in a working class household in the UK, and now lives in New Zealand. Her work has appeared in *The Stinging Fly*, *New Writing Scotland*, *Poetry London*, *The London Magazine*, *The Stony Thursday Book*, *Poetry New Zealand*, among others. She has won a number of awards for her writing, including, The BNZ Katherine Mansfield Literary Award; The Short Fiction Prize (University of Plymouth Press); The Over the Edge New Writer of the Year, in Galway. Most recently she was selected by Eileen Myles as a finalist for the Sarah Broom Poetry Prize 2018, and awarded the Poetry New Zealand Prize 2019.

**DS Maolalai** has been nominated for Best of the Web and twice for the Pushcart Prize. His first collection *Love is Breaking Plates in the Garden* was published in 2016 by the Encircle Press, with *Sad Havoc Among the Birds* forthcoming from Turas Press in 2019.

**Emilee Moyce** is a Cardiff-based poet from central California. She graduated from Kingston University in 2018 with a degree in English literature and creative writing and is currently pursuing an MA in translation studies from Cardiff University.

**Ciarán O'Rourke** was born in 1991 and is based in Dublin. His digital chapbook, *The Sea Path*, was issued by Smithereens Press in 2016. His first collection, *The Buried Breath*, is published by Irish Pages Press.

**Maeve O'Sullivan's** poetry and haiku have been widely published. She is the author of four collections from Alba Publishing: *Initial Response* (2011), *Vocal Chords* (2014), *A Train Hurtles West* (2015) and *Elsewhere* (2017). Maeve is a founder member of the Hibernian Poetry Workshop, and performs with The Poetry Divas.



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